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DEPT FOR NEA/MAG, NEA/IPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV IS MO
SUBJECT: ISRAELI LABOR LEADER VISITS MOROCCO FOR INTERNAL
POLITICAL CONSUMPTION

Classified By: DCM Wayne J. Bush for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (C) During a February 22 meeting with DCM, MFA Director General for Multilateral Affairs and Director for Arab and Islamic Affairs Mohamed Azeroual discussed the February 17 visit of Israeli labor party leader Amir Peretz to Morocco. Azeroual noted that Peretz -- whom he called a "Moroccan" as Peretz was born and lived in Morocco for the first four years of his life -- had met with King Mohammed, in the presence of Royal Advisor Andre Azoulay and MFA Minister Delegate Taieb Fassi Fihri. Peretz then spent the night in Casablanca where he was hosted by the Jewish community. According to Azeroual, Peretz's visit was a purely "political trip," as he and his party are currently out of power and in need of Moroccan-Israeli votes. Azeroual emphasized that the visit had not occurred at the behest of the Moroccans, but rather was a result of internal Israeli political machinations.

¶2. (SBU) According to the official Maghreb Arab Press, Peretz said the meeting with the King was "important and historic," and an opportunity "to share viewpoints on issues relating to the peace process within the region's current context." He added that he was "happy to be in my country that I esteem, respect and like."

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Riley